

Claims:

5 1. A method for processing leadframe items to form IC packages, each of the leadframe items comprising an IC carried by a suitable leadframe, the leadframe items being of two or more types, the method including:

10 receiving the two or more types of leadframe items along respective input paths;

15 moving at least two holders alternately between a processing region and a respective leadframe item reception position, each of the holders moving to the processing region and at a time when the other of the holders moves to its respective reception position, the reception positions being on respective ones of the input paths, each of the holders receiving leadframe items of the respective type at the respective reception position and delivering them to the processing region; and

20 encapsulating the ICs at the processing position.

25 2. A method according to claim 1 in which the at least two holders are portions of a single member, the step of moving the holders being a motion of the member.

30 3. A method according to claim 2 in which the motion is a reciprocating motion and the processing region is located between the at least two reception positions.

4. A method according to claim 3 in which the at least two reception positions are respectively above and below the processing region.

35 5. A method according to claim 1 in which the leadframe items are provided in corresponding magazines, the holders receiving the leadframe items within the corresponding magazines, and the method further including extracting the leadframe items from the magazines in the processing region.

6. An apparatus for processing leadframe items to form IC packages, each of the leadframe items comprising an IC carried by a suitable leadframe, the leadframe items being of two or more types, the apparatus including:

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a loading device comprising:

at least two conveyors arranged to convey the respective types of leadframe items along respective input paths;

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at least two holders;

an actuator for moving the multiple holders alternately between a processing region and a respective leadframe item reception position, the reception positions being on respective ones of the input paths, and each of the holders being arranged to receive leadframe items of the respective type at the respective reception position and deliver them to the processing region; and

15 an encapsulating device at the processing position for encapsulating the ICs.

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7. A loading device for use in the apparatus of claim 6.